

Mom-2-Mom Peer Support for Breastfeeding Initiative (FY02-2106)

Impact

The Mom-2-Mom Peer Support for Breastfeeding Initiative “program in a box” has been made available to all areas of Europe. In addition, the program will be made available on the USACHPPM/DHPW web site as soon as staffing through appropriate consultants is complete.

Description

Breastfed infants are healthier and incur fewer expenses for families and the healthcare system. Trained peer volunteers are an optimal means of sustaining a mother’s breastfeeding efforts and serve as a Military Treatment Facility (MTF) staff multiplier. The Mom-2-Mom Peer Support for Breastfeeding Initiative provides trained volunteers to help new mothers with simple breastfeeding issues and to recommend medical intervention if substantial problems arise. The goal of the program was to improve breastfeeding sustainment and to produce a “program in a box” that could be distributed to other MEDDACs.

Outcomes

The Mom-2-Mom initiative enrolled 200 new mothers out of a population of approximately 1,200. This toolkit was developed so the initiative could be distributed to other Army health care providers in Europe.

Innovative Features

- Mom-2-Mom is unique in that each new mom is assigned a trained volunteer. This trained volunteer helps to bridge the critical gap between newborn discharge from the MTF and successful breastfeeding. Other peer support programs, such as those conducted by other breastfeeding education organizations, do not provide this type of intensive one-on-one support.
- The initiative took the materials developed and lessons learned and developed a program available for distribution to all interested practitioners.

Lessons Learned

- Program success depended on making it easy for new mothers and volunteers to enter the program.
- Referrals to the program from the hospital obstetric and the postpartum units were very low. The local WIC office unexpectedly became the primary referral source for this peer program.